



Feature Release

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CLEAN UP CREWS CALLED HEROES, RECEIVE ACCOLADES FROM MIDDLE SCHOOL CHILDREN

Story by Petty Officer Alan Haraf

SAN FRANCISCO, (November 13, 2007) - Crews working to clean up oil on Muir Beach got a pleasant surprise yesterday when they were handed "Thank You" cards hand written by seventh grade students from the Old Orchard Middle School in Campbell, California calling the crews "Heroes."

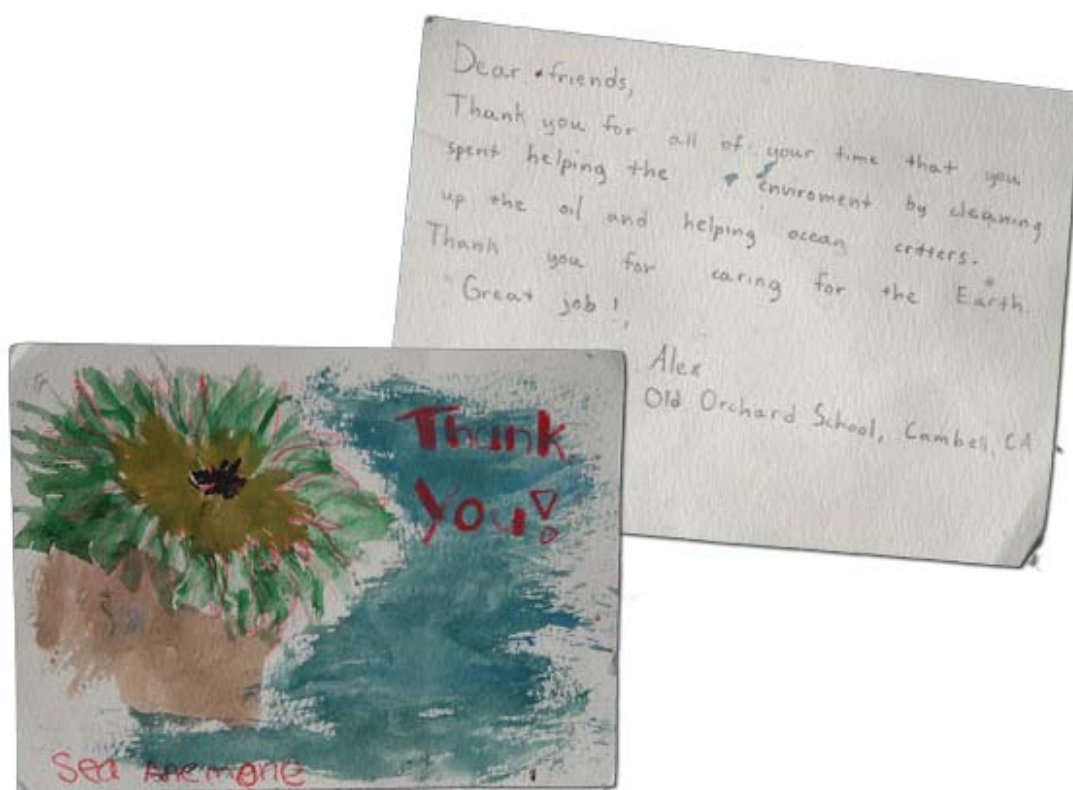
The notes were given to a park ranger who presented them to a supervisor of "Clean Harbors," a company contracted to help with the clean up.

Mr. Win Gould, administrator for the Campbell Upper Middle School, said the students thought of the idea while attending a Science Camp at the Headlands Institute of the Golden Gate Recreational Area.

"The students were originally going to check out whirlpools near the beach, said Gould. "But when they saw the oil and the status of the beach, they began thinking of ways in which to help."

It was very upsetting to see the first bird covered with oil, according to Linh Pham, class teacher for the group. "It made for a sad day."

When the students realized they would not be able to participate in their original plans, they began thinking of other ways in which to help.



One of the ideas was to plan a fundraiser. Another was to put their thoughts in writing.

"Everyone started pitching in and we came up with the idea to write cards," said Erin from the seventh grade.

"We felt helpless that we couldn't go and help the animals or clean up the beach," said another seventh grader, Alex. "We saw birds staggering and people trying to catch them."

The cards were presented to Mr. Barry McFarland of O'Brien's Group and the Incident Commander for the Cosco Busan incident, Assistant Chief Steve Edinger of the Department of Fish and Game, and to Captain William Uberti, Commanding Officer of U. S. Coast Guard Sector San Francisco. The project was also one of the topics at this morning's brief in the Incident Command Post on Treasure Island.

"These cards did a lot for the morale of our cleanup crew," said McFarland. "Some of our crew were actually moved to tears."

"It's one thing to get a thank you or a pat on the back from an adult," said Capt. Uberti. "But when you get a thank you from children, you know you've made an impact."

More than three hundred people in the Incident Command Post are viewing the cards today.

“Dear Clean Up crew- Thank you so much for putting in so much effort into cleaning the oil spill! You have saved many animals and habitat, and keep saving more, so you are heroes. Thank you so much!!! Thank you heroes of SF. It is hard work, but keep persisting! You can do it!!!



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